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Our Man Hoppe

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The Medieval Crossbow Theory



—Arthur Hoppe

THE THEORY that the late President Kennedy was actually shot by six medieval crossbowmen in a gas-filled balloon was first advanced by a free-lance journalist and service station attendant, Mr. Homer T. Pettibone.

His book, "Behind the Inside Report on the Exclusive Disclosures Exposing the Warren Commission," was an instant best-seller.

Appearing on Meet the Press, Mr. Pettibone explained that his work was the result of three years solid research 18 hours a day.

"I have," he said proudly, "read every single book that exposes the Warren Commission and advances a new theory. All 378 of them.

"The purpose of my book," he said with dignity, "is to exonerate the innocent, persecute the guilty, resolve history and make a million dollars."

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ON HIS WILDLY successful nationwide lecture tour, Mr. Pettibone displayed a huge blowup of frame 247 of a fuzzy home movie which clearly showed a gas-filled balloon in the sky. Either that or a water spot on the film.

He then went into a complex analysis of vectors, demonstrating that the deed could only have been performed by a medieval crossbow that shot around corners.

"As proof," he would say triumphantly, "let me point out that no crossbow arrow was found at the scene. Indeed, six crossbow arrows were never recovered. And due to the average loading and firing time of the average medieval crossbow — 27.2 seconds — this obviously means that it would require six medieval crossbow-

men to fire all six unrecovered arrows."

Critics hailed Mr. Pettibone's theory for "its freshness and originality." Experts agreed that it was "consistent with the known facts." The public liked its simplicity and aficionados its mystery. So it was universally accepted and the nation slept easier knowing how the deed was done.

But Mr. Pettibone had made only half a million dollars.

So he wrote a second book, "The Return of Behind the Inside . . . Etcetera." In this he produced a deposition from a fifth cousin twice removed that Officer Ruby had once expressed an interest in medieval crossbows while Jack Tippit had seen "Richard, the Lion-Hearted," (a movie in which crossbows were extensively employed) in a theater only 13.7 miles from the home of Oswald Lee Harvey.

From there, Mr. Pettibone went on to prove conclusively the existence of a conspiracy involving the Right Wing, the FBI, the Left Wing, the Secret Service, all news media, Congress and Troop 102, Boy Scouts of America. Its undeniable purpose: the takeover of the nation by medieval crossbowmen!

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UNFORTUNATELY, the public had turned its attention to a child star who had died from a mysterious overdose of sleeping pills, and nothing much was done to ban crossbows.

"Good heavens!" cried Mr. Pettibone. "The whole nation's in this conspiracy."

Unable to face this horrible fact, he shot himself with a crossbow. A Coroner's Jury hastily ruled his death a suicide. A friend later wrote a book proving definitely it was a suicide. The book didn't sell.